

EXECUTIVE VITALITY: OVERCOMING THE “PERFECT STORM”

In October, we talked about the “perfect storm” of end-of-year events that come rushing at us and offered some suggestions for dealing with the challenges thus presented ([Executive Vitality: Fall Reset](#)). We suggested establishing a vitality plan in the areas of meditation, fitness, eating plan, time with family, budget, work load, goal-setting, and holding good conversations with colleagues.

Now, we want to look more specifically at how you can prepare to handle the stress and promote your own wellness in the face of the bombardment from your current activities in life, the ambiguities in the economy, family dynamics, and work challenges.

We believe it is necessary to live in the present, while being mindful of things you have learned from the past, in order to stay on track in the future. What can you learn from what you are doing now or what you did in the past to enhance your well-being? What do you want to bring forward and what do you want to eliminate in order to achieve what you hope for yourself in the future? Here are five recommendations for maintaining your leadership vitality during the more stressful holiday months. Think about your values, spirituality, health, finances, family, and community.

1. **Spend five minutes every morning identifying your triggers.** Design your plan for dealing with any anticipated stress. For example, do you foresee a meeting with a difficult coworker? Visualize it. Think about how you want the interaction to go and what you need to do to ensure that you live your own values and those of your company.
2. **Start now. Think about how you want your time allocated over the next seven weeks.** Mark your calendar with personal time. Be sure you find those quiet times to “re-charge your batteries”—particularly if you are an introvert. Also, find family time and time to be with supportive and/or fun people.
3. **Create your holiday budget.** How much do you want to spend? Economic times are still a bit crazy and uncertain. Consider whether you want to have a conversation with your family about a need for increased prudence this year (or going forward). Did you know that 91% of holiday gift givers admit to overspending on presents and 26% say, specifically, that they set a budget and overspent it last year? What are some other ways to give without sacrificing your vitality?
4. **Do at least one activity that supports your community.** Volunteer at your local church or homeless shelter; donate some toys or food—whatever resonates with you. It’s great for your personal well-being. Did you know that people who engage in volunteer community service have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not?
5. **If you have a religious or spiritual practice, don’t neglect your spiritual health.** Don’t let the busy-ness of the season get in the way of the sustenance you normally draw from these practices. Remember that this may be a core source of your energy and creativity.

6. **Maintain the activity/exercise you are currently doing...or start one.** This is more important now than ever with more holidays, more food, more stress, and more family. Remember the effects of exercise on endorphins and mood: better sleep, more energy, and greater strength to do all you want to do happily and successfully. Did you know that people who are active sleep more soundly and people who sleep more soundly exercise more energetically? Also, those who exercise feel happier and more relaxed.

Can you take five minutes a day to think about reducing your stress? Can you take really good care of yourself (your time allocation, your finances, and your spiritual and physical well-being) so that you are the best you that you can be?